Pak. j. life soc. Sci. (2025), 23(2): 985-999 E-ISSN: 2221-7630;P-ISSN: 1727-4915

Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences

www.pjlss.edu.pk

https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2025-23.2.00227

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Language, Ideology and Policy: A CDA of Power Relations Among Urdu, Punjabi, and English in Pakistan

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: Aug 26, 2025

Accepted: Oct 19, 2025

Keywords

Language policy
Urdu
Punjabi
English
Van Dijk
Critical discourse analysis
Pakistan
Ideology

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ABSTRACT

The current research examined the discursive constructing and unequal power relationships between Urdu, Punjabi, and English in Pakistan through policy documents, political speeches and educational discourse. The research used a qualitative research design. The critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework by Van Dijk utilized with ideological square, macrostructure and microstructure aspects of analyzing how language ideologies may be demonstrated to reinforce, reflect and challenge well established hierarchies. Data was drawn using purposive sample of texts in constitution, policies in national education, and political speeches by leaders and curriculum text. This research reveals that Urdu is national and moral language, English as an elitist and progressive language and Punjabi is not even provided a platform. Inclusive pronouns, value laden adjectives, and strategic erasure are linguistic features that are used to create distinctions of social classes and sustain such boundaries. Such socio-cultural aspects as nationalism, imprint of colonialism, and social privilege as a vehicle of power behavior is fixed through language application in politics, policy, and education. Language policy has been dominated by Urdu and English due to the historical forces that have dominated the language policy and the elite control. Political narratives and education remain to be means of establishing national identity when it is clear that some languages remain superior to the others. Such discursive procedures maintain the linguistic hegemony and the authorized position of the Urdu and English language. The research promotes a multilingual policy that favors the cultural and educational validity of the local languages, as well as Urdu and English, and, therefore, it rejects the historical marginalization of the linguistic group identity in postcolonial Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not just a means to convey communicative intentions but it is a dynamically strong mechanism with the help of which ideologies are built, identities are constructed as well as social hierarchy continues to persist (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2006). In multilingual nations such as Pakistan, power, ethnicity and politics are closely bound to the choice of language. Ever since its inception in 1947, the issue of linguistic representation has been a bone of contention in Pakistan whereby the state is governed by the use of Urdu, Punjabi, and English that hold different and unequal statuses.

Even though Urdu is a language natively spoken by only a minority it was put forward as a national language to foster a sense of nationhood. This was not an ideologically neutral decision as it reflected the effort by the state to build a national identity that favored the groups of

certain ethnic and linguistic groups, at the expense of others (Rahman, 2002). The use of English, which has origins in the colonial era and has remained the linguistic expression of the ruling class, is still dominant in areas of power including bureaucracy, law, education, and elite communication, and in the case of all these, it results in a language gap between the elite and the rest of the population (Coleman, 2010; Mahboob, 2009). On the other, Punjabi, which is spoken by around forty percent of the people, is barely present in the official, educational and the media discourse, an indicator of its marginalization and exclusion in the institutional power (Rahman, 1996; Mansoor, 2005).

Such hierarchical systems cannot be attributed to chance and are instead propagated by discursive measures incorporated in policy papers, in media discourses and in textbooks. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and specifically, the model of macrostructure and ideological square by Van Dijk (1998) presents an ideal model of deconstructing the issue of how the linguistic ideologies are propagated and replicated. The research will examine how Urdu, Punjabi and English are represented discursively in major Pakistani discourses and how policy and practice of language contributes to control over access to power and perpetuation of social inequity.

Significance of the Study

This research has a lot of importance in determining the interaction between the factors of language, power, and identity in Pakistan. It sheds light on historical, political, and ideological forces that have created language hierarchies in the country by paying attention to Urdu, Punjabi, and English. The study is important in generating a better understanding with regards to the construction of national identity using language policies and language discourses and the result is usually at the cost of the regional languages such as the Punjabi language. It points out to the systemic marginality of Punjabi which has been greatly circulated, and brings out the vitally important deficiency in education policies which helps in understanding what is going on in the Indian television media, and what is said in the society. It also points out the existence of inclusive language planning that treats linguistic diversity in a way that encourages the unity of the nation. With the trend of globalization picking up momentum every day, we need to be able to comprehend these dynamics as a means to ensuring equity, safeguarding the cultures, and enhancing social integration. Finally, the work forms the basis on which the language policies of Pakistan can be reimagined to be more reflective of the multi-lingual phenomenon in the country and create socio-political implications against linguistic marginalization.

Research Questions

1). How do Pakistani language policy documents from 1947 to the present discursively construct Urdu, Punjabi, and English in relation to national identity, power, and exclusion?

2). In what ways do political speeches reinforce or challenge linguistic hierarchies between Urdu, Punjabi, and English through lexical choice, modality, and pronoun usage?

3). How does educational discourse—curriculum, textbooks, and teacher training—reproduce or resist state-endorsed language ideologies, particularly the marginalization of Punjabi?

LITERTAURE REVIEW

The sociolinguistics of Pakistan has received lot of scholarly interest especially in terms of politics of language planning, identity, and power. One of the common threads in this literature is the lopsided position and functional itinerary of Urdu, English and regional languages like Punjabi (Rahman, 1996, 2002; Mansoor, 2005; Mahboob, 2009). This is because the politics of language in Pakistan has a rich history and aesthetic as well as politics. In their analysis of the Dominican Republic, Viteri et al. (2014) leverage Historical Discourse Analysis to document dimensions and variations of silence against children to establish continuities and discontinuities of history as it relates to child punishment in the Dominican Republic. In their research, the authors also mention the tension that exists between on the one hand, the importance of Urdu to give national unity and unity an expression, and on the other hand the importance of the professional and world-opening English language. By the same token,

research by Hussain et al. (2024) uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate the marginalization of Punjabi in favor of Urdu by the higher education sector as an issue that contributes to the problem of linguistic inequity and lack of social cohesion.

Continuing this line of thought, Hussain, Khan, and Khan (2020) draw particular attention to the disparity between the extensive use of the Punjabi vernacular and its official devaluation by the formal discourse through a mixed-methods framework, which positively correlated attrition with low socio-economic status and lack of formal education. Khan et al. also discuss ideological underpinnings of language policies and show how English and Urdu are provided with privilege in opposition to Punjabi, which is associated with informal and rural space and, therefore, reproduces traditional power imbalance and stereotype. Besides, Butt et al. (2024) use the Discourse Historical Approach to connect the language policy with political fragmentation, which is the language policy choice of imposed Urdu and its contribution to the ensuing secession of East Pakistan in 1971. Summing up these studies one can say that this informs us about the reason as to why the language policies of Pakistan are not only neutral but since they are ideologically driven they reproduce hierarchy of power and culture as a part of the historically determined relationships of power. All of them promote an increased focus on inclusion and multilingual policy making system that would consider social inequalities, take into account the linguistic diversity, and create unity in a nation within regions.

However, a lot of this literature tends to be historical policies analysis or education implications based and not as rigorous in discourse analysis with the aim of deconstructing linguistic construction of ideologies in various domains. Under this section, the researcher reviews the relevant literature in three strands, (1) language and national identity, (2) English and elite access, and (3) Punjabi marginalization with the assessment of gaps that will support the positioning of the current research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Language is non-neutral, it articulates ideologies, formats thoughts and cleans up power structures (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1998). The language in multilingual and postcolonial situation like Pakistan, where Urdu, Punjabi and English are competing, language is an ideological battlefield or symbolic control point. In order to examine this intricate relationship between language and power, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Teun A. van Dijk will be adopted in this study as the theoretical framework but with the emphasis on the ideological square, macrostructure and the mind-discourse-society triumvirate.

Van Dijk's Ideological Square: Discursive Polarization

Central to the CDA model presented by Van Dijk (1998, 2006) is the ideological square, which is a diagram that shows how the ideologies of an in-group can be constructed discursively to support the former at the expense of the latter. Such a framework particularly applies in Pakistan where Urdu is used as the language of national unity, English as the representation of modernity and privilege, and Punjabi disgraced as a peripheral parochial and non-prestigious language. Van Dijk model contributes towards shedding light on the discursive strategies namely, lexical choices, the selection of topics, the use of emphasis and omission to glorify the main language (Urdu), normalize the elite language (English) and silence or de-value the mother tongue of the majority (Punjabi). Such constructions are not a fluke but entrenched in political rhetoric and schooling, and media because they enforce linguistic inadequacies under the auspices of national cohesion or global competitiveness. Using the ideological square on this way, this paper discusses to the strategic use of official discourse that promotes the values of the Urdu language, the usefulness of the English language, and displaces or omits the values of the Punjabi language, thereby reinforcing a language hierarchy that prioritizes certain lingual identities of others.

Macrostructure: Thematic Organization and Ideological Control

Another source of the powerful tools to unpack the structural level in terms of reproduction of ideologies is the concept of macrostructure by Van Dijk (1988) which is defined as the global, thematic organization of discourse. Macrostructures constitute not only rhetoric but are highly

ideological in that the selection and ordering of themes in a text (titles, headings, summaries and main arguments) are contained within and produced through ideology as an analytical issue, in that particular ways of singling out and ordering themes becomes relevant and legitimate within a socially located reality. This paper applies macro structural analysis of the foregrounding of selected narratives (i.e., foregrounding national integration through Urdu) and the marginalization of others (i.e. Punjabi as a medium of instruction) in language policy documents, curriculum guidelines and political speeches. These preferences of theme are ideologically driven and are made to manipulate the meaning that the reader takes and the mental templates regarding the authenticity of language. Through the determination of the themes in macro-levels of discourse in the study, ideology framing is attained not only in terms of the words that are used but also within the structures of discourse itself.

Discourse, Cognition, and Society: A Triadic Approach

The difference with Van Dijk (2006) CDA is that the cognition (mental models) and social structures (power, institutions, and group relations) do not operate in isolation and interact with discourse. Such triadic model can be especially effective in Pakistani context, because the issues of language are closely connected with the postcolonial anxieties, regional divisions, class differences, and even colonial relics. The arrangement that most people adopt Urdu as a national language, English as an imperial but also a glamorous one, and the model that Punjabi is looked down upon as a vernacular is not merely a matter of language choice, it relates to the imageries people have regarding authority, modernity, and acknowledgement. The cognitive view developed by Van Dijk makes it possible to understand how the prevalence of certain discourses contributes to the construction of shared social beliefs or social cognitions that justify linguistic inequality as a normal condition.

With this triadic perspective, the present examination shifts beyond the analysis of text into a broader critique of discourse as it to reproduction of power relations between the linguistic groups in Pakistan. Van Dijk has developed a comprehensive framework that explains the role of language as ideology using a multi-level approach; thus, his framework is very preferable to analyze the language practices in this study since it includes both micro and macro perspectives. In contrast to purely linguistic approaches, the CDA employed by Van Dijk incorporates situational and political contexts and mental processes and provides a comprehensive picture of how Urdu, Punjabi and English are linguistically placed and challenged discursively.

Furthermore, it is possible to say that Van Dijk emphasizes the role of discourse as a social practice, which relates to a postcolonial and multilingual setting of Pakistan, where language policy is one of the most important instruments to subject and dominate. By basing his analysis on this choice of theory, the author tries to bring out not only what is being discussed on speech, but what is not being discussed on speech and how this absence of discussion holds together the social order and ideological dominance.

Urdu and National Identity Construction

An account by Tariq Rahman (2002) is one of the most detailed ones of the process of ideologically exalting Urdu to be used as a unifying national symbol after 1947. Anyone can follow the historic and sociological approach used by him to elicit how the state language policy overtly edged out other vernaculars in the name of national unity. Although they are constitutive foundations, Rahman is descriptive at the level of his work and does not address the micro (textual level) discourse of the enactment of such ideologies in official discourse. In the same vein, Mansoor (2005) studies the issue of language planning in higher education and finds out the symbolic use of Urdu in the process of nation building. Her work is a good example of what language policy entails in particular the language minorities. Nevertheless, she fails to interrogate how the construction of Urdu as the national language makes other linguistic identities marginal in discursive practices by using the CDA tools. The present paper extends these understandings by using the ideological square model by Van Dijk (1998) to reveal the discursive construction of Urdu as the language belonging to us and the discursive justification of the language that continues to push the diversity of languages to the backburner.

English, Power, and Privilege

It is well documented that English status in Pakistan has been that of the elite. Coleman (2010) points to the system of elite education, governance and socioeconomic mobility being dominated by English. Although he makes a policy-based analysis, it seems to lay too much stress on structural inequalities without outlining the discursive processes by which the English language has ideologically been associated with modernity and prestige. When it is the study of Pakistani English, it is a new dimension added by Mahboob (2009) as he looks at the Islamic and local features in Pakistani English. His activity touches on language ideology, but a language variation point of view as opposed to a discourse-ideological perspective. These works endorse the status of English as having privileged status, yet, do not question how English is discursively positioned as the language of power and global access over Urdu and Punjabi. The study will fill this gap because it critically analyses the presentation of English compared to the indigenous languages as issues of politics, education and media report it.

Punjabi and Linguistic Marginalization

In spite of being the most spoken language in Pakistan, Punjabi has always been left out of educational system, formal areas, and official missing languages. This marginalization has been mentioned in sources by Rahman (1996) and Ayyaz (2015) and the psychological effects of linguistic shame as experienced by Punjabi speakers have also been explained. There is a trend among these studies to pay close attention to the socio-politics behind silencing Punjabi, but to see the issue of marginalization as a sociological phenomenon rather than how a hyper-individualistic rhetoric promotes this narrative through discourse. In addition to that, Sultana and Durrani (2012) analyze multilingual practice in the Pakistani cities and suggest a more dynamic conception of language practices. Although their study disrupts the bipolarity of Urdu and English, it has paid little attention to the ideological dimensions in the national discourse by doing classroom discourse and principally concentrating on urban youth.

The current research helps to define how Punjabi is discursively omitted or delegitimized in policy documents and other narrative public discourses merely by producing silence as a discursive strategy. Though many have written about the historical and sociopolitical positioning of Urdu, Punjabi and English in Pakistan, little has been said so far about the discursive relations between them which buffer the inequalities in their power relations. The current body of literature is more prone to examine policy outcomes, sociolinguistic, or even language attitudes without giving any attention to the ideological framing found in discourses.

This paper addresses this gap by focusing on the state level in order to explain how the language ideologies are reproduced, naturalized, and challenged in the discourse of the state. This paper explores the discursive juxtaposition of Urdu, Punjabi and English in political speeches, policy texts and media coverage of such discursive formations, to help develop a more nuanced account of language as ideology and power.

The analysis of political rhetoric, educational discourse, and policy texts through the means of the triangulation method will help give a complete description to how the use of the language sets up the power relations, at least in Pakistan. The paper removes the process of creation of the Ideologies of the Urdu, Punjabi, and English Language by employing Van Dijk CDA frameworks to provide a critical analysis of how they have been constructed as instruments of inclusion, exclusion, and domination.

METHODOLOGY

This study research design was relating to the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to check the inequality of the power of Urdu, Punjabi and English in Pakistan. The three representative data sets studied were the language policy documents of 1947-2023 which included the Report of 1959 and Articles of 1973 Constitution, the 2009 and 2017 National Education Policies and Single National Curriculum 2020-2022; political speeches of major Pakistani leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Zia-ul-Haq and Imran Khan especially the ones relating to the language and identity; and lastly the discourse on education using curriculum frameworks, text Correspondingly, the data was intentionally picked and thematically encoded

in accordance with appropriate interpretation of the CDA model which expects to find the most basic patterns of ideological framing, strategies of inclusion and exclusion and pattern-generation of linguistic hierarchies in political, policy, and educational dimensions of texts.

Data Analysis

The subsequent analysis tables draw up an analytical outline of language ideologies in three major areas of Pakistan consisting of policy documents, political address, and educational discourse. The tables are based on Van Dijk CDA framework to distinguish patterns of inclusion, exclusion, and representation of Urdu, English and Punjabi. Both tables point to the role of linguistic decisions in reproduction of social hierarchies and the ideological role of language in general. It is hoped that through the tabulated findings this paper will be able to provide a succinct albeit critical summary of the nature of language as the instrument of power, identity construction and symbolic control within a context of institutions. The tables act as empirical data sets that prove the thesis of the study; that is that language discursive practice in Pakistan undergoes within the context of an unequal and ideologically saturated frame whereby some languages are favored more so than others

Table (1): Language Policy Documents

Document	Year	Key Themes (Macrostructure)	Discursive Strategies (Microstructure)	Ideological Square Applications	Purpose in Study
Constitution of Pakistan (Article 251)	1973	National integration Implementation of Urdu Future replacement of English	Strong modality ("shall be", "must") Exclusion of regional languages No mention of Punjabi	Emphasizes “our” national identity via Urdu Omits “others” (Punjabi speakers)	Shows legal foundation of Urdu dominance; Punjabi exclusion
Education Policy (Z. A. Bhutto)	1972	Islamization and national unity Medium of instruction in Urdu	Urdu framed as "language of the people" Emotional appeals to nationalism	Positively frames Urdu as “us” No recognition of regional languages	Highlights early policy moves to promote Urdu and marginalize Punjabi
National Education Policy	1998	Bilingual proficiency (Urdu + English) Global competitiveness	English framed as "modern", "necessary" Urdu as cultural heritage- Punjabi absent	“Us” Urdu/English users- “Them” non-bilinguals, regional users	Demonstrates the institutionalization of English as elite language
National Education Policy	2009	Early English introduction- Technology and globalization	Lexical emphasis on “progress”, “quality”, “21st century” Urdu minimized No mention of Punjabi	Ideal citizen is English literate- Regional languages outside policy vision	Illustrates increasing privileging of English in formal education
Single National Curriculu	2020–2022	Uniformity National identity Religious unity	Urdu as unifying tool Multilingualism	“Us” Urdu speaking, religiously	Highlights how curriculum

m (Drafts)			equated with division Punjabi invisible	unified citizens "Them" linguistic minorities, viewed as divisive	planning enforces Urdu ideology
National Language Promotion Department Documents	Ongoing (1979-2024)	Implementation of Urdu in administration and courts	Bureaucratic tone Emphasis on "compliance" and "Islamic identity" Punjabi not considered for promotion	Urdu as "official, Islamic, superior" Others (Punjabi) constructed as informal/unofficial	Shows sustained state efforts to operationalize Urdu at the expense of regional languages

In language policy documents that have been examined over the past 70 years, there are some prominent themes and discursive patterns that reveal more crucial ideological underlying structures. The Urdu language is always built up as the signifier of national unity and Islamic ethos made out to be, the string that knits together the newly established nation-state. This is reinforced by high modality rules like shall be the national language which implies a very institutional reinforcement of the dominance of Urdu. Conversely, English, supposedly criticized as the colonial baggage is ironically upheld in institutions of power i.e. higher education, administration and the judiciary in the guise of a technical requirement to the world and upward social mobility. Meanwhile, even though Punjabi is the most spoken language in Pakistan, it is systematically marginalized. It either never exists or has very little survival in cultural or folkloric conditions or it is neither studied in terms of policies nor given much attention. In the discursive structure, policy documents use an ideological square of Van Dijk to present Urdu-speaking communities and their languages as patriotic, unifying, and the primary representation, whereas regional languages such as Punjabi become the type of representation that is divisive or subordinate, which supports a center-periphery model of linguistic authority. Despite a few perceptible changes in language of the policy that hints at a change in practicability or practice it is clear that the overall ideological cloud stays well based within the ideology of Urdu centric nationalism.

Table No. (2): Political Speeches

Speaker & Occasion	Year	Macrostructure (Main Themes)	Microstructure (Discursive Strategies)	Ideological Square Applications	Purpose in Study
Muhammad Ali Jinnah Dhaka Speech	1948	National unity Urdu as national language Rejection of regional claims	Authoritative tone- Urdu framed as unifying force No recognition of Bengali or Punjabi demands	"Us" Urdu speaking Muslims "Them" regional language advocates	Establishes Urdu as state ideology and delegitimizes regional linguistic identities
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Education Reform	1972	Islamic socialism Promotion of Urdu in education State	Urdu framed as "language of the people" Use of inclusive	"Us" Urdu speaking citizens	Reflects early ideological balance between

Speech		modernization	pronouns ("we", "our") Emotional appeal	aligned with socialism "Them" colonial legacies (English) and regionalism	Urdu and anti-elitist politics
Pervez Musharraf National Address on Reforms	2001	Enlightened moderation Role of English in globalization Urdu retained for culture	English framed as key to "modernity", "technology", and "competence" Urdu associated with "values"	"Us" global, bilingual, modern Pakistanis "Them" monolingual, stagnant individuals	Illustrates ideological shift toward English as instrument of power and progress
Imran Khan National Education & Curriculum Speeches	2020–2022	Uniform education Single National Curriculum (SNC) Identity and equity	Urdu framed as "equalizer" and "unifying language" Critique of elitist English medium-Punjabi not mentioned	"Us" Urdu speakers, "true" Pakistanis "Them" English medium elites, regionalists	Reinforces Urdu's role in nation building; Punjabi remains ideologically silenced
Shehbaz Sharif Parliamentary Speeches & Media Talks	2022–2023	Institutional reform Respect for national traditions-Education in national language	Urdu invoked as "heritage" and "responsibility" English as necessity No inclusion of Punjabi	"Us" Urdu respecting citizens "Them" culturally detached elites or separatists	Reaffirms Urdu's symbolic role; maintains English for functionality; ignores Punjabi

This analysis of political discourse in Pakistan uncovers some of the recurrent themes and discursive trends which are a rebuttal to language ideologies that are ingrained. The portrayal of Urdu as a stabilizer of the ideology constantly recurs among the leaders, both Jinnah and Imran Khan, who depicted it as a means to national morality, cultural authenticity, and ideological homogenization. Reshot Song: Politicians often use the inclusive pronouns like we and our to argue the case of Urdu, a rhetorical move that creates an image of national unity and at the same time demonizes the other people who speak other languages. English is however represented in an ambivalence manner, as although it is disparaged as being elitist and a sign of postcolonial display of hegemony, it was simultaneously recognized as a real necessity to the international diplomatic efforts, its role in education, and governance. This bipolarity reinforces its power which is at the same time, material or instrumental and symbolic. The most spoken language, Punjabi, is not used in political discourse much. When it comes up, it has solely an expressive meaning called upon in cultural or non-serious terms but not assigned any tactical or political purpose. This exclusion is in line with the ideological square that Van Dijk formulates where the dominant group creates itself as the protector of national identities (Urdu speakers) and the other, especially the regional languages speakers such as Punjabis, are posited on the periphery or incompatible with the ideology of modernism and nationalism.

Table (3): Educational Discourse

Document/Source	Year(s)	Macrostructure (Themes)	Microstructure (Discursive Strategies)	Ideological Square Applications	Purpose in Study
National Curriculum (Urdu & English Medium Textbooks, Grades 6–10)	2006–2022	National identity Religious and patriotic values Language as cultural vehicle	Urdu as "our" identity English used for science and modernity Punjabi almost entirely absent	"Us" Urdu speakers and moral citizens "Them" regional or non-Urdu speakers	Shows how textbooks construct Urdu as moral/legitimate and English as scientific/powerful
Single National Curriculum (SNC)	2020–2022	Uniformity Language equity Cultural cohesion	Urdu presented as "equalizing" language English framed as elitist Punjabi missing or framed as non-academic	Urdu and English desirable Punjabi ideologically erased	Illustrates ideological construction of Urdu-English dominance; erasure of Punjabi
Punjab Textbook Board Policies	2006–2024	Implementation of language policy Emphasis on Urdu medium English in science/math	High modality ("shall", "must") for Urdu use English seen as "essential skill" Punjabi absent	"Us" bilingual citizens with national identity "Them" those outside national vision	Demonstrates state-mandated silence of Punjabi through curriculum design
School Inspection Reports (Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme - PESRP)	2010–2023	Performance standards Language proficiency English learning outcomes	English used as benchmark for school performance Urdu as secondary medium No documentation in Punjabi	English excellence Urdu culture, identity Punjabi non-existent	Shows institutional preferences for English and Urdu, reinforcing class-based power structures
Teacher Training Manuals & Curriculum Frameworks	2009–2022	Effective delivery of curriculum Language of instruction policies	Urdu encouraged as teaching medium English emphasized for elite competence Punjabi ignored as irrelevant	"Us" trained Urdu-English instructors "Them" untrained vernacular speakers	Reveals how teacher ideology is shaped to support Urdu-English dominance, excluding Punjabi

Language policies and curriculum in the field of educational discourse always position the Urdu, English and Punjabi in a hierarchical and ideologically loaded order. Urdu is the language of moral civilization of the nationality, connected with the concept of patriotism, religious character, and social-minded citizen. The cultures of loading their metaphors and positive adjectives like that of treating Urdu a language of unity and heritage are common in textbooks and policy documents and lends more credence to its symbolic sense of centrality in terms of national identity. In contrast to other languages, English is being conceptualized as the language of advancement and international significance, especially in the fields of science, technology and higher education. Its necessity is reflected in the specific language that official documents refer to it as to be necessary, global or competitive, thus positioning English as the language of upward mobility and international norms. Punjabi, the mother tongue of a large percentage of

the population, is systematically avoided in similarly manner as defined by the curricula, textbooks, and policy discussions. This omission creates a hidden one which indirectly marginalizes the regional languages implying that they are not the right thing to include in educational system in terms of prestige, utility, and cultural values. Such discursive practices contribute to establishment of an ideological system within which the languages used as vehicles of identity and power are Urdu and English, whereas Punjab is underrepresented and hidden within the shadow of the former.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Urdu is also ideologically made to appear as the language of nationalism, identity and moral authority in all spheres. English remains a language of high-status access at the international level, one of mobility, and of statecraft, even though it is problematized in this discourse. The situation is best epitomized by discursively erasing Punjabi through discursive processes even though it is demographically a dominant language group at the expense of cultural subjugation.

According to Urdu language policy documents, the Urdu language continues to be framed as a source of unity of the nation, ideological integrity and Islamic identity (Rahman, 2002; Mansoor, 2005). The legitimizing effect of the process on Urdu and the masking of its exclusion of other languages are portrayed through the use of high modality phrases like shall be the national language which removes the exclusionary nature of the process of legitimizing.

Although not recognized as national, English is retained in higher circles civil service, post-secondary education and is underpinned as practically necessary in order to remain globally relevant. This binary creates English as a required other that is in coexistence with Urdu in hierarchical bilingualism dualism where Urdu is power symbolically, and English in practicality.

Punjabi the mother tongue of most of the majority is purged out in the policy discourse. Its omission is not merely an omission but an active discursive construct that disenfranchises the local identities and brands Urdu as the language of in-group and the rest of the regional languages as fragmental and/or a threat to national unity (Van Dijk, 2006). This strengthens a top down nationalism in language.

The horrible ideological cube is strengthened by the means of political speeches: Urdu is our language, English is something we have to know, but never say that this is our native language, and Punjabi is not to be mentioned at all. The idea of collective identity construction through the use of collective pronouns e.g. use of we and our nation is used and invoked by leaders like Jinnah, Zia-ul-Haq and more recently by Imran Khan who appeals to the moral and unifying choice of Urdu.

Although its tones are uncomfortable to some as it is seen to be colonial or even elitist, there is hardly any attempt to confront it and instead the argument is raised that it is, in fact, essential in international talk or that it is a way to development. This twofold discourse represents fronting in class privilege wherein the populist image is represented as gliding over the background of privileged classes.

Punjabi, when brought up, tends to be reduced to cultural inclinations or even crude jokes, and never is an issue that is addressed through politics or even as a taught subject. The lack of institutional recognition of its appropriation of symbols, recognizes the peripheric location of the language in the hierarchy of power. In such a way, the speeches recreate the ideology of Urdu English hegemony and make Punjabi invisible.

The same power dynamics that are reflected and accentuated by language and language forms is transposed into education discourse and educational practice. Urdu is erected in curriculum and textbooks as the language that reflects morality and culture and patriotism that also strengthens the nationalist narrative even further. It is imposed to induce learning on values and religious beliefs and positioning of citizenship and hence is seen as the standard and the legitimate medium of learning and identification.

As compared to English, however, it is stressed that it is the language of science, technology, and success the global means of mobility and success. Collectively, students are socialized in relation to aspiring to kind of English: it becomes a symbol of socioeconomic privilege (Shamim, 2008).

There are no issues related to the use of Punjabi in content of curriculum, training of teachers or writing of textbooks. Even in Punjab the province in which Punjabi is the main language the language is silenced in its structure, as proposed by Van Dijk rendering it rather speechless. This omission is more than mere oversight this is a symbolic violence that helps to turn Punjabi into non-academic, uncivilized, and even irrelevant thus marginalizing millions of first language speakers.

DISCUSSION

This paper has critically analyzed ideological construction and power play of Urdu, Punjabi, and English in the language policy, political rhetoric and education discourse of Pakistan. Based on the Critical Discourse Analysis framework developed by Van Dijk (1998, 2006) notably the ideological square and macrostructure this study identifies a linguistic hierarchy that has been well established discriminating between Urdu and English and giving the Punjabi very little to offer.

Urdu, on its part, is a strong ideological construction, according to all sets of data. Urdu is perceived not just as a national language, it is also defined as unifying force bound to Islam and national identity mentioned in policy documents since 1947 and up to the present day (Rahman, 2002; Mansoor, 2005). It is this symbolic status that gives it rights to be promoted even at the cost of the regional languages, mostly Punjabi. The ideological extremes that Urdu is defended and defended with regard to use have been highlighted with the usage of the expressions that are characterized by high modality and meaning such as shall be and must remain. Political oratory is reflective of the same trend where such speeches tend to position Urdu as the language of the common man the real Pakistani thus creating a discourse that renders alien the other language identity in the name of national unity.

This monolingual nationalism however negates the fact that Pakistan is a linguistically diverse country and a certain alienation vis-a-vis speakers of the regional languages is being made. The symbolic centrality of Urdu not only conceals practical language requirements in different fields (e.g., in local administration, education), but also stifles the expression of anyone whose chief mode of communication is not Urdu (Shackle, 2007).

Although policy texts criticize English rhetorically as a colonial relic, it is in practice maintained in major institutions including civil services, university education and even foreign affairs making it to play the gatekeeping rules on the social mobility on the economic front. This ambivalence can be traced in the political speeches which on the one hand mourn English elitism, and on the other hand support its practical usefulness when considering international scenario. This two-faced rhetoric results in what has been referred to as linguistic imperialism in which English becomes dominant as it is presented as neutral, necessary and natural (Phillipson 1992).

English has been made an important language in education to further its cause in education. It is portrayed through textbooks and curricula as a precondition of science and technology and further, to success, which promotes educational inequities based on classes (Shamim, 2008). Education in English is used as a symbol of privilege and Urdu-medium schools tend to be underfunded with the education in the Punjabi practically absent.

The most notable discovery here is perhaps the discursive erasure of the Punjabi language as systematic and yet, when Punjabi is the most spoken language in Pakistan. Punjabi is non-existent or minimized to a folk-like detail as compared to a rather resourceful one in policy documentation. Discourse on politics barely recognizes the Punjabi except in symbolic or humorous allusions, as to whether it can be incorporated in education or administration. The almost complete omission of Punjabi in educational set materials is considered by Van Dijk (2006) as what he refers to as ideological exclusion which is the mechanism of forcing particular identities to the periphery by silencing or omitting them.

It is not neutral, such absence has material consequences. Institutionally Specific language subsidies in favor of Urdu and to some extent English: The metropolitanized ability to communicate in English to the exclusion of others is costly to the speakers of Punjabi especially in rural settings in terms of education and employment opportunities. In addition, refusing to accept Punjabi as a legitimate language of instruction further ads up to culture alienation and insecurity among its speakers (Romaine, 2000).

Language in policy, politics, and education thus does not only 'empowerment' communication, but that as the important tool of entrenchment of social hierarchies and ideological domination. The ideological square inherent in the discourse always placed Urdu speakers as national, moral and united, English users as global, competent, elite and Punjabi speakers as informal, backward or irrelevant. These representations create and re-produce stratifications in the society in which language is a symbolic and structural power mechanism. The discourse sanctifies monolingual nationalism by the height of Urdu and supports the elitist bilingualism by preserving English strategically, but it situates the vernacular diversity in invalidate by annihilating a place that Punjabi has in valuable arenas. This corresponds with Bourdieu (1991) theory that language is form of symbolic capital that promoted concept of power relations and classes. Under this system Urdu becomes the ideological language of synthesis, English the language of universal access and class language and Punjabi becomes the peripheral vernacular language, not a proper institutionalized mouth. In this way, discourses which uphold current power relations and discriminate against linguistic variation characterize the linguistic landscape of Pakistan.

The findings indicate that the language politics in Pakistan is not merely about makeups of policy decisions but, it is a discursive construction of power. This requires linguistic re-conceptualization of language planning on the premise of lingual equity, territorial equivalencies and cultural dependence.

The results of the present research find an echo in its predecessors, but also challenge them critically. Although there are previous studies, which have mentions of various aspects of language hierarchy, ideology, and exclusion, the present study provides a rather different discourse-based triangulation of policy, politics and education with particular focus on what is discursively erased within Punjabi.

According to Rahman (2002) and Mansoor (2005) we can say that Urdu was historically created as a sign of Muslim identity and sense of overall cohesion following partition. They highlight the nationalistic advocacy by the states in the promotion of Urdu to bring together a people of diverse languages and in particular amidst ethnic regionalism. This nationalist locating of Urdu in the present analysis is rightly evidenced but goes further to criticize how textually this nationalist ideology is constructed in Van Dijks (2006) ideological square. The statistics demonstrate how Urdu policy and political language position their language, not just as its own, but something more legitimate than the other languages by using the second person pronouns, high modality verbs as well as moral imperatives. In such a way, the research shows the discursive dynamics of linguistic nationalism that previous structuralist interpretations did not address.

There have been numerous accounts of English as the language of access and mobility in elite in Pakistan by Shamim (2008) and Mahboob (2009). English-language schools are symbolic of privilege and at the same time, the publicly funded schools continue to be under-resourced thus encouraging linguistic stratification. Affirming these patterns once again, the present research also discovers the way English is discursively proven to be needed by policy and political documents as required, unavoidable, and as if neutral. Although they believe that English is a colonial heritage, politicians can still defend it to the extent of its promotion as a way of development and competitiveness. Such discursive ambivalence creates the English the ideologically problematic and yet pragmatically indispensable- an understanding that has been underdeveloped in previous studies that simply accepted the existence of this tension as given and failing to examine the manner in which this tension is built textually.

As noted by several researchers, Punjabi are marginalized in terms of both education and the state policy as a whole although it is the majority language in Pakistan: Rahman (1996), Ayres

(2009), and Mansoor (2005). They talk about the stigma of Punjabi as being low status and not academic, or rural. The current study contributes to this argument by showing how Punjabi is not only marginal but is also discursively erased in the sense that it barely exists in state policy and even the discourse of education. In the analysis, it has been evident that it is not an accident but a planned linguistic silencing and symbolic exclusion strategy (Van Dijk, 2006). In contrast to the former literature that emphasized the subjection of Punjabi as a descriptive fact, this paper explicitly demonstrates how this absence of Punjabi can be perceived as an ideological tool of empowering the Urdu-English.

In addition, unlike its previous counterparts that did not pay a lot of attention to the absence of Punjabi in the education realm, this study triangulates its discursive representation in terms of policy manuscripts, political discourses, educational writings, and displays a systematic pattern of erasure that is orchestrated via textual means, instead of being a structural accident.

Most of the studies conducted previously (e.g., Mansoor, 2005; Shamim, 2008; Rahman, 1996) were considering only one of the areas: policy area, education, or media. This was an informative practice however it constrained the appreciation of the manner in which linguistic ideologies are propagated throughout discursive fields. The proposed research can provide a multi-level analysis of discourse because by comparing policy texts, political speeches, and educational discourse, it will be possible to see the presence of dissimilarities, inconsistency, and ideological gaps in language. This wider context permits an expanded level of criticism of linguistic structure of power in Pakistan whereby discourses in various fields act to edify each other in terms of hierarchical ideology.

Among the factual claims under ideological square proposed by Van Dijk (1998 and 2006) is that discourses are to emphasize positive traits of in-group (us) and either de-privileging or excluding out-group (them). This is a discursive polarization that creates power disparities by constructing structures in the texts (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary, presuppositions).

These are the results described in the present study that closely match the ideological square and macrostructure theory as put forward by Van Dijk and more general Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) principles. Urdu is continually portrayed as the language moral, national, and unifying of the above indicating that Van Dijk idea of positive self-presentation is present. A rather different picture is the case of Punjabi, where there is no active censuring, but there is simply the performance of negative other organization through erasure, using strategic silence. On the one hand, English holds an ambiguous discursive status that is tinged as elitist and foreign when criticized and central and necessary when the proponents of the elite need to put it into practice. These two framing are evidence of a controlling discursive game of framing English either as us or them depending on ideological expediency. Such patterns show that the ideological hierarchies mediated through language use favors the interests of the Urdu speaking and English literate elite and supports their hegemony and the neglect of regional languages such as Punjabi.

The macrostructure model by Van Dijk is also confirmed in the analysis of thematic organization of the policy, political and educational discourses in the study. The so-called policy documents often begin and end with a title, a preface of Urdu, the language of the national unity (e.g., the 1973 Constitution), whereas political rhetoric begins and ends with an appeal to the dictates of morality embedded within Urdu establishing a macro- theme of Islamic nationalism. Educational language, like the others, establishes Urdu as a heritage language and English as a global need in text books, lesson plans as well as assessments, which internalize the ideologies in the structural level of discourse. It is unfortunate that no Punjabi is there everywhere in these macrostructures not by chance but by design deliberate erasure in discursively.

Lastly, the power enactments, and reproduction of ideologies through discourse is also true in the findings due to a CDA perspective. Institutional language practices are not neutral nor passive as Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (1998) discuss the institutional language practices are defined by social power and define the social power accordingly. The fact that Urdu has a central place in every sphere signifies the cultural domination of the state and its ideologists. English has been preserved on the basis of elite support that refers to the meritocratic and

globalist discourses whereas the Punjabi language is delegitimized by means of leaving them unrecognized rather than by direct banning. The paper affirms the plausible assumptions of the CDA that is that, language does not present social reality but it rather brings it into being by inculcating and instilling the asymmetrically ordered power relations in discourse.

CONCLUSION

The paper has critically analyzed how Urdu, Punjabi, and English have been ideologically constructed and contested in the policy documents and political speeches, and the text of educational discourse in Pakistan in 1947 to present. Applying the Van Dijk ideological square, macrostructure, and other CDA resources, the analysis can show that the language policy is not a technical or even neutral procedure, but is a highly political and ideological process. Urdu itself has been built around as the national and moral language which is a marker of unity and Islam and Pakistan identity. English is seen through a discursive lens as a colonial relic, but the reality is that it can be used to describe the access to power, opportunities, and social mobility experts. The dominance is that Punjabi the most spoken language has been systematically destroyed in policy, politics and education with a hierarchy where regional identities are subordinated to national and globalized identities. The reading shows how discourses of language are incorporated in a design to maintain power relations. Urdu and English are discursively authorized by high-modality, ethical veneer, and institutional exposure, whereas Punjabi is not, by dint of discursive silence. These tendencies nail down unfairness in the society, protrudes class differences and oppresses the culture.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The status of Punjabi as a medium of instruction must be strengthened at least in primary schools in order to support linguistic equity and cultural inclusions within the country especially in Punjab in line with the recommendation on mother-tongue based multilingual education by UNESCO. This requires, first, the establishment of a standardized orthography and set of educational materials to make Punjabi literate. At the same time, national language policy must be corrected so that it represents the other strong linguistic affiliation in Pakistan by removing any connection with Urdu-centric nationalism and recognizing the regional languages Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto and Balochi as the important elements of national identity. The equitable access to English also needs to be facilitated by eliminating the rural-urban divide via investing in the quality education of English in the public sector as it strives to move on the elitist legacy to a more balanced, inclusive system. The classroom is an area where linguistic justice must attempt to be translated into reality by means of translanguaging pedagogies and educational training allowing teachers to explore multilingual practices that minimize language-based discrimination and foster cultural pride. Finally, due to discursive silence of Punjabi in political and policy rhetoric, there is a need to address the situation, where public figures as well as policy statements should explicitly address and include Punjabi in their language planning discourse and actively foster multilingualism in political discourse to incorporate the variety of languages in the polity towards increasing civic engagement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research would be helpful to build upon the topic of investigation and look into the media discourse such as newspapers, television, and social media to track the same way hierarchies in the use of language are created and perpetuated in the minds of the general population. This kind of analysis would provide the useful perspective on the role of language ideologies in spreading and naturalizing outside the institutions of formal education. The long-term impact of the mother-tongue education policy on students at academic levels, cognitive level of development and identity could also be initiated through longitudinal studies and so empirical evidence in favour or against the formulations of language planning schemes could be supported.

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